

Chapter 10

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:10-14)

Israel, in an historical event which allegorically represents salvation in Jesus Christ, was delivered from Egyptian bondage by God's grace through faith. Prior to her departure from Egypt she was told to take a lamb (for a family) on the tenth day of the month of Abib (March/April). The lamb was to be examined from the tenth to the fourteenth to see that it was without spot or blemish. It was to be a male of the first year, out of the sheep or out of the goats. The lamb was to be slain on the afternoon of the fourteenth. Its blood was to be caught in a basin and it was to be applied to ... *the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein ye shall eat it.* It was to be roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. God told the

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Jews He would pass through the land on the night of the fifteenth of Abib, and the blood upon the door posts would be a token for them. God said, ... *when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt* (Exodus 12:13).

The Jews kept the Passover and were delivered from the judgment of the firstborn, so that the Egyptians demanded that they leave Egypt. Led by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day, they came to the edge of the Red Sea, with the mountains of Pihahiroth on the one side and Baalzephon on the other. By this time Pharaoh had changed his mind, so that:

... the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. (Exodus 14:9-20)

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Moses stretched forth the rod of God and the waters of the Red Sea parted as God had promised. In the morning Israel marched through the sea on dry ground. In the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul provides us with a great spiritual lesson from the historical events in Exodus. He tells us, the Jews were *baptized ... in the cloud and in the sea*. Thus when we compare the historical events in Exodus with the allegorical significance Paul placed upon the cloud and the sea, it is evident Israel entered the baptismal waters as a saved people (under the blood of the passover lamb) and the Egyptians entered the same waters as lost men.

The waters could have caused Israel's death, but because their faith had been exercised in the applied blood of the passover lamb, this represented their salvation; the cloud represented their baptism with the Spirit, and the waters of the Red Sea portrayed their baptism in water. Thus the combined events portrayed the co-crucifixion, co-burial and co-resurrection of believers with Christ. Consequently when the Egyptians attempted to pass through the sea, they all died in the sea. The reason is evident. In the typology of Scripture, they entered the waters of the Red Sea (which represented the grave) without regard to the applied blood of the passover Lamb. Thus they entered into death and the grave (the baptismal waters) without salvation in Jesus Christ. (Baptism in water does not provide life. Neither shall any rise with Christ in the first resurrection who does not have his faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.)

Despite Israel's salvation and her songs of deliverance and rejoicing on the far side of the Red Sea, when faced with difficulties, little had changed with her. She manifested her sin nature by continuing to complain against Moses and the Lord. She missed the significance of the bitter waters at Marah, of which Peter referred (indirectly) in his first epistle:

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That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (I Peter 1:7)

God sweetened the waters of Marah when Moses cast a tree into them. This indicates all of a believer's bitter experiences in life are sweetened by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Israel left Marah and came to Elim where, in the middle of the desert, God refreshed her with twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. She left Elim, traveling toward Sinai, *on the fifteenth day of the second month* after her departure from Egypt:

And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. (Exodus 16:3-4, emphasis mine)

This test was not for the benefit of an Omniscient God. It was to prove to Israel that they could not walk in God's law. In the matter of the manna, some gathered more than they were told to gather and some gathered less, but ... *he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.* During the first five days of the week they were instructed not to attempt to save manna for the next day:

Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. (Exodus 16:20)

Moses instructed Israel that on the sixth day they were to gather twice as much as they gathered daily, so that there would be no gatherings on the Sabbath. This extra portion would not spoil as it had on the previous days. Even so:

... it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather,

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and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. (Exodus 16:27-30, emphasis mine)

Israel continued her journey toward Sinai. She gathered manna daily except on the Sabbath, and despite God's instructions to Israel through Moses, the infractions continued, so that God said to Moses, *Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth out of Egypt.* Later in the wilderness, after the construction of the tabernacle, this omer was placed in the Ark of Testimony to declare Israel's unbelief in the matter of the manna.

If ever there was a people who should have declared to the Lord, *We do not wish to be under a covenant of law because we have not the ability to perform such a covenant*, it was Israel and, in the same respect, we are no different than they. She left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, and beginning on the fifteenth day of the second month, she was tested daily in the matter of the manna and failed miserably. Despite her failures in Egypt and en route to Sinai, when God offered Israel the law, she emphatically declared, like so many misinformed Christians, *All that the Lord our God hath spoken, we will do.* Apparently she was completely blind to her inabilities and so were the Gentiles at Galatia. Despite Paul's preaching of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, many of the Galatians were ready to place themselves under the bondage of the law, even though, like Israel, they had not the ability to keep it.

The Galatians, like Israel, or anyone else who desires to be under the law, only viewed the law from the standpoint of the blessings offered for the performance of it and not on the basis of

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the curses for their failure to perform it. If Israel had been paying attention to her behavior of backbiting and unbelief prior to entering into the covenant of law, she might have avoided the terrible judgments that befell her as a nation. No one in Israel could claim ignorance of the curses of the law as an excuse, because:

... Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day. And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: and these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deuteronomy 27:9-26, emphasis mine)

Legalist rarely speak of this, but the curses for failure before the law were as much a part of the law as the blessings. In fact there were more curses than blessings, because it is impossible for man, with his sin nature, to perform the deeds of the law.

This should have been seen in the emphasis between blessings and curses in the twenty-

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eight chapter of Deuteronomy: where fourteen verses were used to describe the blessings of the law and fifty-four verses were used to describe the curses for failure to perform the law. The emphasis is God's! Consequently Paul wrote the Galatians, *Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them* to emphasize that man is incapable of performing the deeds of the law; but this did not change the minds of the Jews, nor the minds of the legalist among the Galatians.

This confirms and establishes two simple principles relating to law. First, Paul wrote the Corinthians, *The strength of [the] sin is the law*; and second, in the face of this, one cannot be justified by that which condemns him. Our Lord dealt with this in His sermon on the mount when He revealed that the thoughts of man towards sin and a violation of the terms of the law are as much a failure before the law as the actual commission of the acts. Thus in the matter of adultery and murder, which He addressed in His sermon on the mount, one does not actually have to commit these things to be guilty of them: for the man that desires a woman, other than his wife, has committed adultery already in his heart, even though he may never actually come in contact with the woman. In His sermon on the mount our Lord summarized the just demands of the law to the nation of Israel, when He said: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect* (Matthew 5:48).

This is the just demand of the law. When we consider this demand in the light of the nature of man, *who has sinned and come short of the glory of God* and of whom *there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not*, we see that no man can stand before the just and holy law of God. It condemns us all. Further, when we consider that man is compelled by

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the sin to attempt to perform the deeds of the law, yet, because of this sin, he does not have the ability to perform the law, we should be able to see, beyond a reasonable doubt, *Therefore by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in His sight.*

These truths must be learned. They are a part of the believer's growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are not known, nor are they automatically understood simply because a person is saved. The believer must undergo a process of growth in the fundamentals of the faith to be clear in his relationship with law and grace. This is one of the primary reasons Paul instructed the Colossians in their life of faith, by writing: *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving* (Colossians 2:6-7). When we, as believers in Jesus Christ, reflect upon how Christ was received in salvation, we should recognize He was received by grace through faith, without the deeds of the law. He was not received by works of righteousness which we have done. Therefore the same way we received Him, we are to walk in Him, *rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith.*

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul revealed to the Galatians that Abraham was justified before God by faith. This took place before the law ever came into existence. Consequently justification by faith, apart from the deeds of the law, is an inexorable principle which reflects the immutability of God. Thus the principle of salvation by grace, apart from the deeds of the law, is eternally settled in the holy character and nature of God, so that if one man, like Abraham, could be justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, then all men must be able to be justified the same way. This being true, the justification of sinners could not be accomplished without

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consideration for, and satisfaction of, all of the attributes of God which relate to His relationship with man. In other words, in God's perfect plan for the redemption of fallen man, one attribute of God could not be compromised or ignored for the sake of another attribute of God. Thus God's love for fallen man could not allow Him to bestow His mercy and grace without first satisfying the demands of His holiness, justice and righteousness, which are reflected in the law. We would expect God's plan of salvation, revealed in the Scriptures, to satisfy all of the attributes of God completely and perfectly, and this is exactly what we find in the Scriptures.

However man does not think in these terms. Man thinks in terms of his corrupted sense of good and evil, received as a result of the fall. Therefore the apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians: *The sting of death is [the] sin; and the strength of the sin is [the] law* (I Corinthians 15:56). Thus man's corrupted sense of right and wrong is strengthened by God's holy law in a way which causes him to think that justification before God must come by some sort of human behavior related to the principles of the law. This is the reason man views the law as an end in itself: to give him standards by which to measure himself; to convince himself that he has, in his mind, an acceptable measure of righteousness. Despite this, the law still performs its function of condemnation for failure.

For anyone ensnared in a legalistic manner of thinking to have any sense of security, he must create his own god in his own likeness according to his own biased view of himself. He must accuse others and excuse himself in order to reinforce his sense of righteousness. Consequently he must corrupt the Scriptures and the God of the Scriptures. He must, in his mind, make God conform to a view that gives him some sense of security; and he must interpret the law

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in a way that negates his failures, while giving him a sense of fulfillment. This brings us to our text, where Paul, by the lawful use of the law, reveals man's true condition before the law: *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them* (Galatians 3:10). It is self-evident, the law cannot produce life; it produces death for everyone who tries to be justified by its precepts. Consequently Paul wrote: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith...* (Galatians 3:11-12).

God has provided hope for those who are condemned by the law through faith in the promise of God. Paul also made it clear that law is not faith; thus, after the law has brought the individual sinner to the place of trusting in the promise of God, through the gospel, there is no further need of the law. In this regard, it is important to note, that at the same time that the law was given to Moses on the mount, God also gave him the pattern of the tabernacle. While the law was designed to reveal man's fallen nature and inability to perform the laws of God, the pattern for the tabernacle, and its sacrificial system, was designed to portray salvation by grace through faith in the promised Redeemer.

If the Jews had understood the distinction between the law and the tabernacle worship, they might have understood that they could not be justified by law, but most of them did not. For the most part, Israel was ignorant of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (as He was portrayed in His Person and in His work) in the tabernacle; in sacrificial animals; in people; in historical events; in institutions, etc. These shadows and types were given to Israel to reveal, in mystery

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form, the Savior who would redeem them by faith, apart from the deeds of the law. This manner of revelation unveils the fact that virtually everything that happened in the history of Israel was a spiritual lesson for those who had, and have, the *eyes* and *the ears* to see and hear them.

This can be seen in the Moabites. They were related to the Jews through Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Despite their close kinship, they had deep feelings of animosity toward the Jews. One of the reasons for this animosity was the fact that the Moabites had apostatized and had become idolaters, worshipping gods such as Moloch and Baal. After the Jews' exodus from Egypt and during their subsequent journey to Canaan, Balak (king of the Moabites) observed the Jews as they traveled. His actions enable us to understand God's command to Moses:

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee. (Deuteronomy 23:3-5)

Another cause for the Moabites' animosity towards Israel was a jealousy born of God's promises to Abraham. God's covenant with Abraham had two types of blessings. There were promises and blessings for a natural seed, as well as promises and blessings for a spiritual Seed. The natural, or earthly, promises were directed primarily toward Israel: to provide the natural setting and lineage through which the Christ was to come into this world: to fulfill and provide the spiritual promises. Thus Jesus, the eternal Christ, was born of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to provide eternal salvation and a heavenly inheritance to: *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ.*

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Even though the promised blessings were directed primarily to Israel, to provide the One through Whom all the families of the earth would be blessed, there have always been collateral blessings to those associated with the people of God. For example, Pharaoh and the Egyptians were blessed because of Joseph. Likewise certain nations, such as the United States of America, have enjoyed great blessings because the gospel has gone forth from them. Nations have been blessed because of the people of God and not because of any righteousness of their own, as well as blessings for both the natural and the spiritual seed of Abraham. God said:

... Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. (Deuteronomy 2:9)

Despite this the Moabites were fearful of the Jews, because they had observed the battle between the Jews and the Amorites and had seen the Heshbonite and Bashanite kingdoms of Sihon and Og destroyed. The Moabites believed the Jews would battle with them as they had battled with the Amorites. Thus Balak sent messengers to Balaam, a prophet of God, promising him riches and fame if he would curse the children of Israel. Balak did this despite the fact the Moabites and the Israelites were related; he did this despite Israel's attempts at peaceable passage; he did this despite God's promises to Moab and Ammon respecting their lands; he did this because he saw nothing good in Israel. He saw Israel with his natural mind and eyes and could not see them as a judicially justified people: a people who had been delivered from Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb and not because of personal righteousness.

This attempted curse of a people who were blessed produced an interesting and enlightening set of circumstances. The historical events involving Balak and Balaam forms an

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allegory in their relationship with the nation of Israel. Balak is representative of people, such as the Judaizers, who seek to bring believers under the curse of the law. Balaam represents that aspect of the law which would curse the people of God if it could, but it cannot because they are reckoned dead to the law. Israel represents believers in Jesus Christ, who have been justified by faith, apart from the deeds of the law. They have no righteousness of their own that is acceptable to God. Likewise the counsel (or doctrine) of Balaam, which we will consider later, represents the misappropriation and misapplication of the law.

Continuing with the allegory, Balak sought to curse the people of God, and our text reveals the law curses all who fail to perform it perfectly. Likewise Balaam, as a prophet of God, was God's servant, just as *The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*. Balak and Balaam had a legalistic view of Israel. With this view, they would have cursed her if they could, but God would not allow her to be cursed, because God had justified her freely by His grace, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (which was represented in the Passover Lamb). God had counted her judicially dead to the law and alive unto Himself. This is a new covenant relationship (which was put into effect for all believers of all ages, the moment Christ died and rose again from the dead). It views the believer, from the moment of salvation, through the judicial reckoning of God. Thus it applies Christ's fulfillment of the law to the believer's account, as well as the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to all of the believer's sins. Thus the believer's *life is hid with Christ in God*.

We have learned [the] *faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*. Therefore for the believer's faith to grow as it should, it must be nurtured (on a regular basis) by *every word*

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that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus taught the Jews how to pray. This prayer has been called *the Lord's prayer*, though really, it is Israel's prayer in its relationship with God. In this prayer, Jesus instructed them to pray, ... *give us this day our daily bread...* Since our Lord, in His relationship with His disciples, was never concerned with the provision of bread, and since our Lord told the Devil, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God:* we understand the preaching and teaching of the Word of God to be the *daily bread* of the Lord's prayer, for which our Lord instructed the Jews to pray. This bread is absolutely essential to the life of faith. Consequently believers are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is, because of the *daily bread* aspect of the Word of God. The *daily bread* aspect of the Word of God is one of the reasons the Lord gifted the church with many different spiritual gifts and particularly with teaching pastors. Thus through the sound teaching of the Word of God and through growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer learns to think according to the Word of God and to function by faith. In this position, he will come to understand ... *the law is not of faith.*

Many of the Galatians did not fully comprehend this need, nor these truths. Apparently this is the reason they did not appropriate and obey the truths they had been taught by Paul. This lack of spiritual growth made them susceptible to the lies of the Judaizers. Along with this susceptibility, there was a desire by some to produce something in the flesh of which they could boast. Their lack of growth, along with their fleshly desires, led to the corruption of the gospel and, for some, the acceptance of *another gospel.*

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Since it is impossible for a believer to lose his salvation, we should be concerned with how apostasy can take place. Apostasy is the result of neglect. While an individual believer cannot apostatize, a nation or a church can. Israel apostatized through the counsel of Balaam. The curse, which could not be directly pronounced upon the Jews because of God's protective grace (through the blood of the Passover Lamb, or faith in the serpent lifted up upon a pole) fell upon subsequent generations of Jews because of Balaam's counsel.

Balaam's counsel worked this way: while God had instructed the nation of Israel to maintain its separation from the people of the land, Balaam counseled them to settle down with the inhabitants of the land and marry their sons and daughters. Even though the Scriptures do not give us all of the details of Balaam's counsel, we are sure Balaam advised the Jews to put away their differences because *Ye are brethren* (Abraham and Lot were uncle and nephew, so the Moabites and the Ammonites were closely related to the Jews).

In a manner similar to Balaam's counsel to Israel, there has been a subtle eroding of the truth in present-day churches. False teachers, like the Judaizers, have *crept in unawares*, as *wolves in sheep's clothing*, undermining and perverting the Word of God. Like the Galatians, these churches have subjected themselves to the flesh and not to the Spirit. Thus Balak, Balaam and the Judaizers dealt with those who had been saved by grace (who could not be cursed) in the same manner as their modern-day counterparts.

The error of the Judaizers was they viewed the people of God through the eyes of the flesh. They saw the believers in the churches of Galatia as a people who should not have the blessings of God. They viewed them in their failed performances and not through the blood of Christ.

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Therefore they saw them in their sins -- without the righteousness of Christ. They saw them as a people who should be cursed. This has been the constant criticism of the religious world towards those of us who stand firm in our belief of salvation by grace, apart from the deeds of the law. We believe salvation is of the Lord. We believe we are saved by faith (which is a gift of God) in Jesus Christ, in His Person and in His work, in our behalf.

Years after the incident involving Balak and Balaam, the prophet Micah (led of the Spirit of God) revealed: *O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord* (Micah 6:5, emphasis mine). For those of you familiar with the account, you may remember: Balaam did not curse the Jews, according to Balak's request, but blessed them because God did not allow him to behold any iniquity or perverseness in them. Since Balaam's answer to Balak was given to him by God, it reveals the righteousness of God, which is the believer's by faith in Jesus Christ. By comparing the historical events with Micah's statement, we are able to see the imputed righteousness of Christ provides a righteous standing of believers before God, no matter the observations and desires of enemies, such as Balak, to the contrary.

Nevertheless Balaam's nefarious counsel denied future generations of Jews this righteousness by corrupting the truth. Oddly, Balaam's counsel was based upon the law, but it was the law misappropriated and misapplied. He disregarded the exactness of the law regarding idolatry and the worship of God and taught the Jews there was no difference between the faith of the Jews and the worship of Baal and Moloch and the other gods of the Moabites. As we have seen, he taught them that the Moabites were their brethren, and it was perfectly okay for the Jews

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and the Moabites to intermarry. By his counsel, Balaam undermined the truth of the gospel and the separation of the Jews, which preserved that truth. This produced the departure from the truth referred to by John in the book of the Revelation:

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (Revelation 2:14)

Thus the Jewish people, who could not have been cursed because of the truth revealed to their fathers, found themselves under the curse by the counsel of Balaam. If the fathers had defended the truth, so that their children were instructed in the truth, the children would have been in a position to understand the terms of the gospel. They would have been in a position to understand that the curse of sin, revealed by the law, could be lifted the moment they placed their faith in the atoning work of the promised Messiah.

However, through their false worship, the Jews placed themselves in a position in which the curse of sin, revealed by the law, could not be removed; because this curse could only be removed through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was impossible for the vicarious atonement of Christ (which alone could remove the curse) to be known in the worship of Baal and Moloch and the other gods of the Moabites. Therefore apostasy ensued in Israel through the counsel of Balaam. The violation of the Jews' separation produced in Israel what could not have otherwise been produced if Israel had lived by faith according to the truth of the Word of God.

A terrible price is paid by those who are believers in Jesus Christ when they neglect *the faith that was once delivered unto the saints*. There are various causes for believers to neglect this

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salvation. Sometimes, through fleshly desires, petty jealousies and fraudulent counsel, they can allow the things they have heard to slip away. This does not mean they lose their salvation; it means they neglect the truth committed to their trust. Future generations -- their own children and grandchildren -- are not raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Thus Balaam was true to his typology. Balaam revealed he would have cursed the people of God if he could, but he could not. Also, true to his typology, Balaam cursed those who followed his counsel, just as the law curses those who believe they can be justified by it.

Even so, with the giving of the law, there was the giving of the sacrificial system, which revealed the grace of God in the face of failure before the law. The answer of God to Balaam revealed:

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. (Numbers 23:19-21, emphasis mine)

Considering all that we know of Israel's unbelief and failures when she came out of Egypt and during her wilderness wanderings, how was it possible for God to say that he had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel? The answer, of course, is found in our text, where Paul wrote:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus removed the curse of the law. Thus, through the

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judicial reckoning of God, the sins of the whole world were transferred to Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. On the cross, Christ stood in the stead of the sinner and bore his judgment. The judgment of the curse which was upon the sinner was transferred to Christ. Similarly the sinner has no righteousness of his own that is acceptable to God. In the same manner, the judicial reckoning of God declares the sinner, who has placed his faith in Christ, to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to his account. Consequently God counts him, by judicial reckoning, to be without perverseness or iniquity. God counts him to be holy, to be just, to be righteous and to be *accepted in the Beloved*. The evidence of this transaction, which is entered into by faith, is that the believer, who was once alienated from God, is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Thus the Spirit of God testifies to the believer's spirit that he is a child of God. Through the judicial reckoning of God, Israel was counted to be under the redeeming blood of Christ and *accepted in the Beloved*, when Balak and Balaam sought to curse her. Therefore she could not be cursed because she was blessed.

The incident of faith which brought the Jews under the blood of Christ was, as we have seen, the exodus of the nation from Egypt. God told the Jews to sacrifice a lamb for each family and apply the blood of the lamb to the door posts and lintels of their houses. God promised that when He saw the blood of the lamb, He would pass over the houses where the blood was applied and not visit judgment upon the firstborn. It was the application of the blood of the Passover lamb (which is reckoned, in the typology of Scripture, to be an expression of the Jews' faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ) that enabled God to say, *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel*. Thus as we have seen:

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... the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing, because the Lord thy God loved thee. (Deuteronomy 23:5)

This is the essence of the gospel according to Paul: the curse has been turned into a blessing for all who believe. Hallelujah! What a Savior!